



## ARE YOU IN DENIAL?

If you have a pattern of having someone share their *Story of Faith* (life before Jesus, encountering Jesus, life since/lately with Jesus) and/or sharing *Evidences of God's grace*, begin with that, followed by a time of thankful prayer for Christ's work in the individual's life/the grace in your lives.

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### OPENING COMMENT

Unwittingly, through the political wrangling, Pilate unveils Jesus' true identity as King! Jesus is secure in the ultimate authority found in God and does nothing to influence or change the course of the discourse even though he is abused, mocked, shamed, and beaten. In the end, the Jews reject Jesus as King! In doing so, they not only reject Jesus, but God himself.

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### READ THE TEXT: [John 18:38 - 19:16](#)

Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in him. But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" They cried out again, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.

Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. They came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands. Pilate went out again and said to them, "See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!" When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has



made himself the Son of God." When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin."

From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar." So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Kingship is a foreign concept in modern day Canada. Even though we still theoretically work with a monarchy, the concept of kingly authority is unfamiliar. Take some time to consider how kingly leadership would differ from our current leadership structures.
2. How might Jesus' kingship change the way we look at what he taught and how he lived?
3. How does the way Jesus live differ from worldly kingship? What characteristics would be indicative of true, heavenly, kingship?
4. Have you ever experienced any resistance to Jesus from those around you? If so, what were their objections?
5. In rejecting Jesus' teaching and the claims he made of himself, the Jewish leadership found themselves guilty of the "greater sin" and ultimately forsook God himself in declaring allegiance to Caesar. How might we be guilty of falling into the same camp of rejection of Jesus, his teaching, and his claims on our lives?
6. In what ways does the resurrection of Jesus impact the claims he made and things he taught?
7. Even though we all find ourselves in the same crowd as the Jewish leaders; rejecting Jesus' claims and teaching, the reason he came, taught, died, and rose again was to reconcile us to himself. What amazing grace! How might this colour our interaction with his Word, his demands on our lives, and our interactions with those who reject him?



## CONCLUSION

God has been rejected throughout human history. From the third chapter of Genesis to the present, people reject Him. No matter how clearly he shows himself or how compassionately he acts towards us, humanity is bent in on itself and reflexively rejects Him. Yet Christ bore that rejection and granted us new life in Him. Our prayer should continually be toward God transforming our hearts to more accurately reflect and more obediently follow his example in Christ.

## SHARE & PRAY

- Share how you can pray for each other in light of this study.
- Conclude by spending some time praying for one another, for the areas of growth and grace you are seeking, and the needs among you.

